

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MASERU 00786 060621Z  
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 /087 W  
-----009324 070026Z /65

R 050830Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MASERU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8493  
INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY MBABANE  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
AMKMNSUL DURBAN 0203  
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 0786

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

3.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS SREF SF LT  
SUBJ: REFUGEE VIOLENCE OVER EASTER WEEKEND

1. SUMMARY. OVER THE FOUR DAY EASTER WEEKEND THERE WERE SEVERAL INCIDENCES OF VIOLENCE AMONG THE YOUNG REFUGEES IN MASERU AND BETWEEN REFUGEES AND RESIDENTS OF MASERU. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS U.N. DESK OFFICER, THERE WERE FIGHTS AT LOCAL DISCO AND BAR BETWEEN REFUGEES AND MASERU RESIDENTS. ALLEGEDLY REFUGEES WERE ROAMING AROUND DISCO PREMISES, LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. SEVERAL BASOTHO RECEIVED MINOR INJURIES.

3. IN A SEPARATE INCIDENT, THERE WAS A SERIOUS INJURY TO A REFUGEE WHEN ANOTHER REFUGEE CUT HIS ARM WITH A KNIFE. THIS INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN THE VERY OVER-CROWDED "REFUGEE HOUSE"

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PAGE 02 MASERU 00786 060621Z

IN MASERU. THIS HOUSE HAS AT LEAST TWENTY YOUNG MEN LIVING IN IT AND IN THE GARAGE AND THERE IS EVEN A TENT PITCHED IN THE GARDEN TO HELP ACCOMMODATE THE OVERFLOW. THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE TWO REFUGEES IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF DISTURBANCES AMONG THE RESIDENTS OF THE HOUSE, REFLECTING A SPLIT ALONG ANC AND PAC LINES.

4. UNDP OFFICER WHO HANDLES REFUGEE MATTERS IN ABSENCE OF A UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, INFORMS US THAT REFUGEES ARE NOW ARRIVING IN LESOTHO AT THE RATE OF ABOUT FIVE PER WEEK AND THAT DEALING WITH REFUGEES HERE IS CONSEQUENTLY GROWING MORE DIFFICULT EACH MONTH. HE ESTIMATES THAT NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN LESOTHO IS APPROACHING 200 (INCLUDING SOUTH AFRICANS, NAMIBIANS, ZIMBABWEANS), UP FROM LESS THAN 100 LAST YEAR. UNDP OFFICER ALSO INFORMS EMBASSY THAT GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO OFFICES AND VOLAG (CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF LESOTHO) HAVE DONE POOR JOB OF COUNSELING AND ASSISTING REFUGEES WHO ARE OFTEN SHUNTED FROM ONE OFFICE TO ANOTHER WITHOUT RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS. ALL RECEIVE BASIC MAINTENANCE PAYMENT OF 30 RAND A MONTH (ABOUT \$35.00) BUT FUNDS FOR CLOTHING ALLOWANCES HAVE RUN OUT. ALMOST ALL REFUGEES CLAIM THEY ARRIVE WITH ONLY THE CLOTHES ON THEIR BACK AND REQUEST CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.

5. UNHCR EARLIER THIS YEAR SET ASIDE FUNDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL QUARTERS FOR REFUGEES BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, THE LESOTHO MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS FAILED TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO GET THE BUILDINGS UNDERWAY. THE INTENT WAS TO BUILD SEVERAL HOUSES THAT WOULD ENABLE GOVT TO SEPARATE THE FACTIONS. UNDP REPORTS THAT GOL IS FOCUSING ON CONSTRUCTION OF A REFUGEE ARRIVAL CENTER INSTEAD OF GETTING ON WITH THE BUILDING OF QUARTERS.

6. UNDP INFORMS THAT PERMANENT UNHCR REP, BOUBAKAR (MALIAN)  
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PAGE 03 MASERU 00786 060621Z

IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE HERE THIS MONTH. IT IS HOPED HE WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE REFUGEE COUNSELING/ASSISTANCE THAN HAS BEEN AVAILABLE HERETOFORE.

7. COMMENT: HOUSING FOR THE REFUGEES IN MASERU IS SEVERELY CRAMPED AND ALMOST BOUND TO BREED VIOLENCE. A NUMBER OF REFUGEES HAVE NOTHING TO KEEP THEM BUSY, BIDING THEIR TIME UNTIL THE NEW SCHOOL TERM BEGINS. SO FAR THE PROBLEMS HAVE NOT SPREAD TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD BUT THERE IS DANGER OF THIS AND OF CONTINUING TROUBLES AMONG REFUGEES IN JAM-PACKED "REFUGEE HOUSE".  
STOKES

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REFUGEES, CIVIL DISORDERS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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